United Nations A/C.5/52/SR.35

General Assembly
Fifty-second session

Official Records

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10 December 1997

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Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 35th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 2 December 1997 at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Chowdhury ..... (Bangladesh)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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Agenda item 116: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (*continued*)

Agenda item 121: United Nations common system (*continued*)

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97-83369 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 116: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (*continued*)

Agenda item 121: United Nations common system (*continued*) (A/32/30; A/C.5/52/22)

1. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), presenting the oral report of the Advisory Committee on the administrative and financial implications of the decisions and recommendations contained in the report of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), said that the Commission's recommendations were submitted directly to the General Assembly for its review, and the Advisory Committee had normally confined itself to reviewing the administrative and financial implications of Commission decisions and recommendations. The total financial implications for the common system were $2,434,890 per year. The financial implications for the United Nations regular budget were estimated at $795,480 per year, but would be $1,471,800 for the biennium. That amount would be reviewed by the Secretary-General in the context of the recosting of the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, to be considered before the end of the regular session.

2. Should the General Assembly accept the recommendations of the Commission relating to the United Nations, the financial implications would be approximately $1.5 million. The extent to which additional requirements would arise would be considered in the context of the Secretary-General's report on the recosting of the programme budget proposals for the biennium 1998-1999.

3. **The Chairman** said that the Advisory Committee's recommendations on the administrative and financial implications of the decisions and recommendations of ICSC would be considered in informal consultations.

4. He drew the Committee's attention to the allocation to it (A/C.5/52/1/Add.2) of agenda item 160, entitled "Admission of the International Seabed Authority to membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund", and to a letter from the President of the General Assembly (A/C.5/52/27) requesting the Fifth Committee to take up on a priority basis upon receipt of the Advisory Committee's report, the financial and budgetary implications, as contained in document A/52/303, of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the reform programme (A/51/950).

5. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee's report would be available by the end of the week.

6. **The Chairman** said that the Committee appreciated the Advisory Committee's efforts to make the report available for its consideration.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.

United Nations A/C.5/52/SR.36

General Assembly
Fifty-second session

Official Records

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10 December 1997

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Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 36th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 4 December 1997, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Ms. Daes (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Greece)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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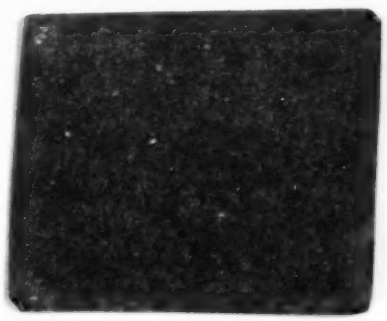
Agenda item 135: Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (*continued*)

Agenda item 137: Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (*continued*)



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97-83381 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 135: Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (*continued*) (A/51/976; A/52/520 and A/52/696; A/C.5/52/4 and Corr.1)

Agenda item 137: Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (*continued*) (A/52/30, A/52/520, A/52/696 and A/52/697; A/C.5/52/13)

1. **Mr. Wharton** (United States of America) said that the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda were now fully discharging their responsibilities. Since the number of trials in The Hague and Arusha was to increase, additional support was required from the United Nations to meet the high costs involved. His delegation continued to support the work of the Tribunals and believed that the necessary resources should be made available to them. They must dispense justice fairly, and the individuals involved in atrocities must be held accountable if the peoples of the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda were to live in peace and international standards were to be reaffirmed.

2. Since the number of indicted persons delivered up to the Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia was increasing, a second courtroom had to be constructed by early 1998 and equipped with the necessary personnel. The present budget provided for such a courtroom to be in operation early in 1999, but his Government was working with another Government to make in-kind contributions to speed up the process. If those voluntary contributions went forward, part of the $2.9 million budgeted for the courtroom would not be needed. His delegation therefore requested that the $2.9 million should be used flexibly — in part to hire temporary assistance to operate the courtroom. It encouraged all delegations to make similar in-kind contributions to the Tribunal for Rwanda.

3. General Assembly resolution 51/243 contained proper guidance on the use of gratis personnel. For example, the budget projections of the number of trials to be held in 1998 clearly did not envisage that many additional indicted persons would be taken into custody. That was clearly not the intention of the Security Council and the General Assembly. Arrangements should therefore be made to use gratis personnel in accordance with resolution 51/243 to provide expertise not readily available in the Organization.

4. His delegation supported the conclusions and the budget recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on the two Tribunals.

5. **Mr. Maddens** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associate countries of Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia and, in addition, Liechtenstein, said that the budget proposals for the two Tribunals deserved commendation, for they took into account almost all the observations made by delegations on the topic. The European Union could accept the main lines of the Secretary-General's proposals, subject to the comments of ACABQ. They were consistent with the Committee's decision to provide the two Tribunals with the means to carry out their mandates.

6. With respect to the performance indicators, the emphasis in the debate should be on their definition and evaluation. They were one of the main tools in the budgetary exercise, and in future the kind of information which they provided should be used in all budget debates. The European Union accepted the ACABQ recommendations on vacancy rates, but would welcome an assurance that recruitment would not be delayed. Furthermore, the Secretariat's proposal for phasing out gratis personnel was in conformity with the Committee's decision on the subject. With regard to the conversion of posts held by gratis personnel and other temporary posts, the inclusion of an evaluation of the budgetary impact for a full year was welcome.

7. The ACABQ recommendations on the conditions of service of the Judges were acceptable, as was the Secretary-General's proposal for the financing of the Tribunals, although the European Union would have preferred it to be based on the regular budget scale. The large unused balance of approximately 15 per cent for the Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia was worrying. The European Union had stressed on earlier occasions that the General Assembly had called for the presentation of recent financial information concerning the preceding period when budgets were submitted. On a related point, performance reports including performance indicators for the Tribunals for the year in question would be welcome.

8. The European Union agreed with the Advisory Committee's comment that the Tribunal for Rwanda should analyse fully the requirements related to witness protection. It welcomed the intention of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to give particular attention to following up its report on the management of that Tribunal. It also welcomed the information provided in paragraph 20 of the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/52/13) concerning the measures taken to improve the security of the Tribunal's personnel.

9. **Mr. Skjønsberg** (Norway) said that his delegation echoed a number of the observations made on behalf of the European Union. The success of the two Tribunals would be important for the attainment of the objective of establishing a permanent international criminal court. His delegation could also accept the Secretary-General's budget proposals for the two Tribunals and had taken due note of the positive comments of the Advisory Committee. The Tribunals needed increased resources, and the financing mechanism proposed by the Secretary-General was acceptable, although his country would have preferred using only the regular budget scale. Flexibility would be needed in the implementation of the phasing- out of gratis personnel, in order not to jeopardize the specialized legal operations currently dependent on such personnel. Paragraph 4 (a) of resolution 51/243 provided for the necessary flexibility.

10. **Mr. Jaremczuk** (Poland) said that his delegation fully supported the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

11. **Mr. Sial** (Pakistan) said that his Government attached great importance to the work of the two Tribunals. Despite its financial difficulties, it had been among the first to announce a cash contribution — of $1 million to the Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Its assessed contributions to the two Tribunals would be paid shortly, for Pakistan believed that resources commensurate with their mandates should be provided for the implementation of approved activities.

12. The Secretary-General's reports on the two Tribunals took into account the views of Member States and the requirements mentioned by ACABQ. The attachment to the reports of the Secretariat's responses to the ACABQ recommendations was welcome, and the practice should be followed in other instances. His delegation had always considered that budget proposals should be submitted on a full-cost basis. For the first time, the proposals before the Committee reflected clearly the requirements of the two Tribunals. The Secretary-General had also taken into account resolution 51/243 on the phasing-out of gratis personnel. The Secretariat would no doubt do likewise in other cases. Since the Advisory Committee had reported vacancy rates of 29 and 17.5 per cent in the Office of the Prosecutor and the Registry respectively of the Tribunal for Rwanda, the Secretariat should have planned to recruit the personnel required for 1998 in good time, especially as the resolution on gratis personnel had been adopted in early September 1977. Appropriate action should now be taken as a matter of priority. The reduction in the allocation of funds for consultants and experts in both Tribunals was welcome. Such staff should be used strictly in accordance with the relevant regulations and resolution 51/226.

13. The Secretary-General was proposihg to provide $24,100 under "Travel" for the Board of Auditors to audit the Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and $45,500 under "Contractual services" for the audit of the Tribunal for Rwanda. The Secretariat should clarify why two different heads of account had been used for the same purpose. Moreover, the $18,400 requested under "Travel" for audit of the Rwanda Tribunal by OIOS might not be justified, as OIOS had its own travel budget. His delegation endorsed the opinion of ACABQ that the budgeting of the audit requirements should have been better explained. The exorbitant increases under "Other staff costs" and "Contractual services" did not indicate sound fiscal management and needed further justification.

14. With regard to the review of the conditions of service of the Judges, his delegation would have appreciated receiving at the present session the Advisory Committee's recommendations on the Secretary-General's report on the topic (A/52/520). Deferment of the question to the fifty-third session meant that the "provisional" situation would continue for more than a year. The Secretariat should indicate how it would deal with the question of the pensions of Judges retiring in 1998. His delegation supported the 50/50 formula for the apportionment of the expenses of the two Tribunals under the regular budget and peacekeeping scales.

15. **Mr. Saha** (India) said that his delegation accepted the Secretary-General's proposals and endorsed the views of the Advisory Committee. It welcomed in particular the action taken by the Secretary-General to phase out gratis personnel, and would like similar action to be taken prior to the consideration of the support account budget.

16. **Ms. Peña** (Mexico) said that her delegation remained convinced that the two Tribunals should continue to be financed in accordance with the agreement reached three years ago, i.e., through a separate account with additional resources and in accordance with the 50/50 formula. It

welcomed the Secretary-General's commitment to implementing the resolution on gratis personnel, for that commitment would strengthen the confidence of Member States in the Secretariat with respect to the implementation of General Assembly resolutions.

17. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Planning and Budget Division) said with regard to the questions put by the representative of Belgium that the Secretariat would continue to recruit at full speed, for it did not interpret the ACABQ recommendation as imposing any constraint in that respect; performance reports for both Tribunals would be issued in May 1998, and the Secretariat would include performance indicators for 1997 wherever possible.

18. Turning to the questions put by the representative of Pakistan, he said that with respect to the conditions of service of the Judges the Secretariat would have to continue as at present, since it could not go beyond the conditions, including pension arrangements, approved by the General Assembly. The provision for the external audit of the Tribunal for Rwanda had been included under "Contractual services" because the budget for that Tribunal covered only a travel component, but the Secretariat had been requested to make provision for fees in addition to travel. It had not been requested to make any provision for fees in the case of the Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and had therefore restricted the budget request to a travel component. The increases under "Contractual services" and "Other staff costs" could be discussed in detail in the informal consultations, but he would point out that in the case of the Tribunal for Rwanda certain travel costs connected with defence counsel had been reclassified to "Contractual services", so that the increase was more apparent than real.

19. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had thus concluded its general discussion of agenda items 135 and 137.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

United Nations A/C.5/52/SR.37

General Assembly
Fifty-second session

Official Records

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23 December 1997

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Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 37th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 8 December 1997, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Chowdhury ..... (Bangladesh)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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Agenda item 116: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 *(continued)*

Agenda item 160: Admission of the International Seabed Authority to membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund

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97-83403 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 116: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 *(continued)* (A/52/7/Add.1 and 2, A/52/16/Add.1, A/52/303; A/51/950 and Add.1-6; A/C.5/52/20 and A/C.5/52/27)

1. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (A/52/303), said that it outlined the programmatic and financial consequences of the Secretary-General's reform proposals contained in document A/51/950. A number of changes had been made in some budget sections and new sections 1B, 2B and 34 had been created.

2. Under section 1A (Overall policy-making, direction and coordination), the Secretary-General proposed the establishment of a post of Deputy Secretary-General, whose immediate office would consist of one Director (D-2), one P-5, one personal assistant and two secretaries in the General Service category. A small Strategic Planning Unit would be set up to advise on critical medium-term trends that might affect the Organization's programme of work and to recommend strategic policy direction.

3. Section 1B (General Assembly affairs and conference services) provided for the creation of a new Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, whose major objective would be to ensure, through the provision of authoritative advice and substantive services, the orderly and procedurally correct conduct of the meetings and other work of the General Assembly. The new Department would assume responsibility for the activities concerning General Assembly affairs and decolonization, previously undertaken by the Department of Political Affairs, the technical secretariat servicing of the Economic and Social Council, formerly provided by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, and the Conference Services component of the Office of Conference and Support Services in the Department of Management.

4. Under section 2B (Disarmament), a Department of Disarmament Affairs would be established, headed by an Under-Secretary-General. The establishment of the new Department would entail the transfer, from the Department of Political Affairs to the new Department, of activities under programme 26, Disarmament, of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, including the servicing of the Conference on Disarmament and backstopping to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

5. Under section 6 (Legal affairs), it was proposed to reclassify the D-2 post in the Office of the Legal Counsel to the Assistant Secretary-General level in order to strengthen the Office of Legal Affairs.

6. With regard to section 7A (Economic and social affairs), the Secretary-General had decided to consolidate policy coordination and sustainable development (section 7), economic and social information and policy analysis (section 9) and development support and management services (section 10) into a single department. Integration of support for policy formulation, analytical and normative functions and relevant technical cooperation activities would rationalize and strengthen competencies in the economic and social fields developed in different areas of the Secretariat, reduce overlapping and fragmentation of skills and create the necessary synergy to provide first-rate services to Member States in those fields.

7. Under section 14 (Crime control), it was proposed to reconstitute the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division as the Centre for International Crime Prevention, which, together with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, would form the new Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. Following the establishment of the Centre, special emphasis would be placed on the implementation of relevant General Assembly resolutions and declarations, in particular the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism. Two new posts (one P-5 and one P-4) were being proposed to strengthen the Centre's capacity to address issues related to terrorism.

8. Under section 22 (Human rights), it was proposed to reclassify the post of head of the New York Office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights from the D-1 to the D-2 level. The issue of human rights cut across each of four substantive fields of the Secretariat's work programme: peace and security; economic and social affairs; development cooperation; and humanitarian affairs. A major task for the United Nations, therefore, was to enhance its human rights programme and to integrate it fully into the broad range of activities of the Organization. The head of the New York Office would have additional substantive and representational responsibilities in line with the aforementioned efforts. In addition, it was proposed to reclassify a P-5 post in the Office of the High Commissioner to the D-1 level to serve as Special Assistant to the High Commissioner. The abolition of two General Service posts was also being proposed.

9. Under section 25 (Humanitarian assistance), the Secretary-General had decided to establish the Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, headed by an Under-

Secretary-General, at United Nations Headquarters. The Coordinator would focus on the core functions identified by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/182 and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs would be discontinued in its current form. Following the reorganization and refocusing of the work of the Office of Emergency Relief Coordinator and the consolidation of functions, it was proposed to abolish 16 Professional and 9 General Service posts. In relation to the transfer to UNDP of responsibilities related to capacity-building, a provision of $2,309,300 was proposed as a contribution to be made to UNDP.

10. Under section 26 (Communications and public information), the Secretary-General, as part of the overall reform of the Organization, proposed to transform the Department of Public Information into an Office of Communications and Public Information, to be headed by an Under-Secretary-General. One of the recommendations of the task force which had been established to conduct an examination of the current activities of the Department of Public Information was that, in general, national personnel should be utilized as the main conduit for programme delivery and that emphasis should be placed on the strengthening of partnership links with local United Nations support groups. Information centres would also be streamlined to focus on information and communications activities and administrative posts would be reduced. It was proposed to abolish 51 local level posts, together with two General Service posts at the New York Information Centres Service, one P-4 and two General Service posts at the Geneva Information Service, and one General Service post at the Vienna Information Service. Resources released by the proposed reduction of posts would be redirected to enhance outreach and information activities within the centres through flexible use of local capabilities in United Nations programmes and activities, as well as updating related technologies.

11. Under section 27A (Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management), he said that the Department of Management would place emphasis on the determination of management policies, provision of management guidance and oversight of the effectiveness of managerial activities throughout the Secretariat. The new structure of the Department of Management would include a Management Policy Office headed by a Director at the D-2 level, which would provide policy advice and support the work of the Management Policy Committee.

12. In conclusion, under section 34 (Development account), the Secretary-General was proposing that a development account be established. The budgetary implications of the programme of reform dealt with in the report before the Committee amounted to a reduction of $12,702,700 in relation to the proposed programme budget. Proposals for the operation of the development account would be submitted to the General Assembly at a later stage.

13. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's second report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (A/52/7/Add.1), observed that it had been finalized before the General Assembly had completed its review of a number of the recommendations on reform contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/51/950). Moreover the Advisory Committee's recommendations on the proposals contained in document A/51/950 had yet to be acted upon by the General Assembly. In a number of cases, additional information had been requested.

14. The Advisory Committee was concerned at the rate at which high-level posts were being created and had requested full information on such posts. In paragraphs 3 to 7 of its report (A/52/7/Add.1), it provided a number of options with regard to the creation of the post of Deputy Secretary-General and would consider the related financial implications once the General Assembly had selected an option. It recommended acceptance of all of the Secretary-General's staffing proposals for high-level posts, with the exception of the reclassification of the D-2 post in the Office of Legal Affairs. It was not convinced of the need for such reclassification. Indeed, after an exchange of views with the Legal Counsel, it had concluded that the Office needed increased staffing resources rather than a new post of Assistant Secretary-General.

15. With regard to section 1B (General Assembly affairs and conference services), it had requested additional information on the distribution and management of resources for the decolonization programme. It had also recommended that, starting with the biennium 1998-1999, resources for the Office of the President of the General Assembly, should be presented and approved on an object of expenditure basis.

16. The Advisory Committee's comments on section 25 (Humanitarian assistance) were contained in paragraphs 42 to 46. ACABQ questioned the appropriateness of having the Department of Peacekeeping Operations deal with the humanitarian aspects of demining and recommended that implementation of that function be monitored carefully. Regarding the transfer of responsibility for the coordination of disaster mitigation activities to UNDP, it was necessary to clarify whether those functions would, in future, be funded from extrabudgetary resources or whether they would continue to be funded from the regular budget. If the latter

was the case, the proposed provision of $2.3 million to UNDP could not be regarded as a one-time grant.

17. The table in paragraph 53 contained the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the level of appropriation for each section of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. It reflected the Advisory Committee's views on net budgeting and included the programme budget implications of a number of the recommendations contained in chapter II of the Advisory Committee's first report (A/52/7).

18. The Advisory Committee's recommendations amounted to approximately $48.9 million more than the amount proposed by the Secretary-General, which was largely attributable to the inclusion of amounts netted out under sections 1B, 29, 11 and 32. Had its recommendations been based on the net presentation of the Secretary-General, they would have amounted to $765,100 more than the Secretary-General's proposals. Regardless of whether it was based on the net presentation by the Secretary-General or the full presentation by the Advisory Committee, the amount that would have to be assessed on Member States would still be $2,214,142,300.

19. The third report of the Advisory Committee (A/52/7/Add.2) dealt with two issues: additional expenditures relating to the maintenance of peace and security and those deriving from inflation and currency fluctuations. In paragraph 7, the Advisory Committee recommended that the Secretary-General should make provision in the budget outline for expenditure for missions related to peace and security that were expected to be extended or approved during the course of the biennium. If that view was endorsed by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General should be requested to submit a technical proposal on the modalities for implementation.

20. On the question of additional expenditures deriving from inflation and currency fluctuation, the Advisory Committee had requested background information. It concurred with the Secretary-General's conclusion that, under the circumstances, the current mechanism for dealing with inflation and currency fluctuation might still be the most appropriate.

21. **Mr. Chinvanno** (Vice-Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination), introducing the report of that Committee on the work of its resumed thirty-seventh session (A/52/16/Add.1), said that the Committee had decided to recommend that, when considering the Secretary-General's reform proposals, the General Assembly should take into account the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

22. The Committee had taken note of the information contained in section 1B (General Assembly affairs and conference services) and section 7A (Economic and social affairs) and wished to draw the General Assembly's attention to the variations between the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 and the Secretary-General's proposals.

23. The Committee had been unable to reach agreement on the conclusions and recommendations to be made to the General Assembly concerning section 2B (Disarmament), section 22 (Human rights), section 25 (Humanitarian assistance) and section 26 (Communications and public information).

24. With regard to section 14 (Crime control), the Committee had recommended that the General Assembly should take into consideration the views which Member States had expressed in the discussion of that section.

25. The Committee had taken note of the information contained in section 27A (Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management), 27C (Office of Human Resources Management) and 27D (Support services).

26. Finally, concerning section 34 (Development account), the Committee had noted the proposal to establish a development account, and had also noted that it was not an area within the scope of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001. The modalities for its operation and the role of the General Assembly in the utilization of that account would need to be provided by the Secretariat to the General Assembly at a later date.

27. **Mr. Yamagiwa** (Japan) said that, while his delegation needed more time to adequately review the Advisory Committee's second report (A/52/7/Add.1), it supported many of the recommendations contained therein. For example, it supported the appropriation of $12.7 million in respect of the development account (para. 55), and it shared the Advisory Committee's concern at the tendency to increase the number of high-level posts (para. 56). In that connection, it welcomed the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the two posts that were to be abolished in the Examinations and Tests Section under section 27C should be restored, since that would contribute to the continued smooth implementation of the national competitive examination programme.

28. His delegation was convinced that the Secretariat would be able to clarify the various technical issues relating to the concept of "net budgeting" and that the Fifth Committee would be able to endorse the introduction of that format by the end of the current session. Every effort should be made to keep the final budget level below the figure of

$2,583 million, following the budget outline decided upon by the General Assembly.

29. Lastly, he appealed to Member States to make every effort to fulfil their obligations under the Charter, since the effort to achieve reform would end in failure unless a sound financial base was secured.

30. **Mr. Ovia** (Papua New Guinea), supported by **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) and **Ms. Montaño** (Bolivia), said that the decolonization programme had been one of the major success stories of the United Nations. The Special Committee of 24 was doing its best to assist the peoples of the remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories to exercise their right to self-determination and to achieve the goal of a world free of colonialism by the twenty-first century.

31. At the current critical stage in the decolonization process, it was of paramount importance for the Fifth Committee to approve the demand of many Member States that the Decolonization Unit should be maintained in the Department of Political Affairs and be provided with all relevant resources in conformity with the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001. Such an action would also be in conformity with the pledge of the Secretary-General to the Chairman of the Special Committee of 24 contained in document A/52/531 and would also comply with the recommendations of ACABQ contained in paragraphs 14, 15, 16 and 21 of its report (A/52/7/Add.1). The issue had already been debated in many forums, and there was widespread support for the position of his delegation.

32. **Mr. Maddens** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union supported the Secretary-General's reform proposals as contained in document A/51/950. However, detailed discussion of the budget proposals contained in document A/52/303 should take place within the context of the discussions on the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

33. **Mr. Skjonsberg** (Norway) said that his delegation associated itself fully with the statement of the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union.

34. **Mr. Deineko** (Russian Federation) said that the reform proposals put forward by the Secretary-General would no doubt have a major influence on the work of the Organization by increasing its effectiveness and ability to adapt to the realities of the contemporary world. His delegation had studied the proposals, many of which required careful consideration in the context of the adoption of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, and was prepared to take an active part in the discussions on their implementation.

35. His delegation had no objection to the proposal for the establishment of a post of Deputy Secretary-General, and it supported the recommendations of ACABQ regarding the staffing of that office contained in paragraph 8 of its report. It also concurred with the views expressed in paragraph 6.

36. His delegation supported the proposal to establish a Strategic Planning Unit, but it had serious doubts regarding the request for an additional $250,000 for the services of consultants and experts, and would like to receive clarification from the Secretariat.

37. His delegation welcomed the consolidation of almost all the Secretariat's conference-related functions in a single Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, as it viewed them as a substantive function of the Secretariat. Care must be taken, however, to ensure that the new Department received adequate financial and human resources. The proposal to reclassify the post of Director of that Department from D-2 to Assistant Secretary-General level should be given favourable consideration.

38. In view of the growing role of the President of the General Assembly, his delegation did not oppose increased funding for that Office, but it concurred with the recommendations in paragraph 20 of the report of ACABQ that those funds should be approved on an object of expenditure basis.

39. Although it had no objection to the opening of a Department of Disarmament Affairs in New York, his delegation felt that the proposal should be implemented within the context of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001. It was also important to maintain the lead role of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and the existing regional centres for disarmament. In that connection, his delegation saw no reason for the new department to be headed by an Under-Secretary-General. It also supported the recommendation of ACABQ regarding the Office of the Legal Counsel contained in paragraph 28 of its report. His delegation looked forward to receiving a further report from the Secretary-General on the proposed development account and the "dividend for development" in general.

40. Finally, it fully supported the views expressed by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 56, regarding the trend towards raising the grade level of posts, which would distort the grade "pyramid". In the report which ACABQ had requested on the grading structure, the Secretary-General should make proposals on ways to remedy that situation.

41. **Mr. Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement of the

representative of Papua New Guinea regarding the status of the Decolonization Unit. The report of ACABQ contained in document A/52/7/Add.1 had shed light on some of the ambiguities of the Secretary-General's proposal and the apparent contradictions with the proposed programme budget. His delegation strongly supported paragraph 15 of the report of ACABQ, and asked the Committee to recommend that the General Assembly should maintain all posts for the Decolonization Unit in conformity with the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 and leave the post of Chief of the Unit at the D-1 level. There was no need to divide the work of the Unit between the Departments of Political Affairs and General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, since that would create overlap. The General Assembly must provide the Unit with a level of political consideration in keeping with its lofty task.

42. **Ms. Arce** (Mexico) said that her Government was concerned at the apparent decline in the number of regular budget posts in the new Department of Disarmament Affairs. From a preliminary review, it appeared that the Geneva office retained the same number of posts. However, in New York, one D-2 post, four P-5 posts and three General Service posts were being eliminated, and she would like to know the reasons. In the First Committee, many delegations had rejected the Secretary-General's proposal to eliminate the P-5 posts representing the heads of the three regional disarmament centres. She hoped that the new staffing table requested in paragraph 25 of the report of ACABQ would clarify the matter.

43. **Mr. Stanislaus** (Grenada) said that his delegation attached great importance to the Decolonization Unit. In order to expedite adoption of the programme budget, it was essential for the Fifth Committee to reinstate the Unit in the Department of Political Affairs and make available all necessary funds.

44. **Ms. Shearouse** (United States of America) said that her delegation formally requested clarifications and a legal opinion on some questions relating to net budgeting.

45. **Mr. Ayoub** (Iraq) said that, as a member of the Special Committee of 24, his delegation had been among the sponsors of a draft resolution on decolonization, which it had agreed to withdraw after receiving assurances that the Decolonization Unit would remain in the Department of Political Affairs. He joined other delegations in urging that the status of the Unit should remain unchanged.

Agenda item 160: Admission of the International Seabed Authority to membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (A/52/233 and Add.1; A/C.5/52/26, A/C.5/51/1/Add.2)

46. **Mr. Gieri** (Secretary, United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund) said that the International Seabed Authority had requested membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. Article 3 of the Regulations of the Fund provided that membership was open to any international, intergovernmental organization that participated in the common system of salaries, allowances and other conditions of service of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. The International Seabed Authority met those criteria.

47. Article 3 also provided that admission would be by decision of the General Assembly upon the affirmative recommendation of the Pension Board, which had given a positive recommendation regarding the application through its Standing Committee.

48. If the application should be approved, membership of the International Seabed Authority in the Fund would become effective from 1 January 1998.

49. **The Chairman** said that he would take it that the Committee wished to recommend to the General Assembly that it should adopt the following draft decision:

> "*The General Assembly*
>
> "*Decides* to admit the International Seabed Authority to membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, in accordance with article 3 of the Regulations of the Fund, with effect from 1 January 1998."

50. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.

United Nations A/C.5/52/SR.38

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Summary record of the 38th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 9 December 1997, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Chowdhury ..... (Bangladesh)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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97-83415 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 116: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (*continued*) (A/51/950 and Corr.1 (Arabic only) and Add.1-6; A/52/7/Add.1 and Add.2, A/52/16/Add.1 and A/52/303 and Add.1)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/52/L.19: United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (A/52/707; A/C.5/52/21 and Add.1)

1. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) introduced document A/52/707, which contained the Advisory Committee's report on the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/52/21) concerning draft resolution A/52/L.19, entitled "United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala". In his statement, the Secretary-General estimated that resource requirements for the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) for an additional 21 months would amount to $66,654,800 gross ($61,815,100 net). That estimate represented an increase of some $3.2 million over the amount which would have been required to cover another 21 months at the level of resources authorized previously. The increase was related to the Secretary-General's request that the staffing component of the Mission should be strengthened and that two new subregional offices should be established.

2. The Advisory Committee's comments on those proposals were contained in paragraphs 7 to 22 of its report (A/52/707). Paragraphs 10, 11, 14, 17 and 19 contained observations which would lead to significant economies. However, the Advisory Committee had not recommended any reduction of the estimates, since the additional expenditure arising out of its recommendations in paragraphs 15 and 16 might partially offset the economies referred to in the other paragraphs. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee had recommended the approval of $61.8 million net for MINUGUA, plus a proportionate amount for staff assessment.

3. After the Advisory Committee had completed its report, draft resolution A/52/L.19 had been amended to reflect an extension of MINUGUA for nine months instead of 21. The Secretary-General had submitted an amendment to his report (A/C.5/52/21/Add.1) indicating that, should the General Assembly decide to adopt draft resolution A/52/L.19/Rev.1, an additional appropriation of $28,200,000 would be required under section 3 of the proposed programme budget for 1998-1999 and an additional appropriation of $1,752,800 would be required under section 32, to be offset by the same amount under income section 1. However, the Advisory Committee had not found it necessary to review the Secretary-General's amended statement, and maintained its original submission of $66,654,800 gross ($61,815,100 net).

4. The General Assembly had already decided not to link the political mandates of peacekeeping missions to the budget periods, in order to ensure financial stability and predictability in budgeting for such missions. Therefore, the Committee might wish to consider whether it should proceed likewise in the case of MINUGUA, which was expected to continue operations until 1999. Should the Committee decide otherwise and approve the proposed appropriation of $28.2 million, the Advisory Committee assumed that its comments would be taken into account in the implementation of the appropriation authorized by the Fifth Committee.

5. **Ms. Goicochea** (Cuba) said that, according to the budget process established by General Assembly resolution 41/213, which remained in force, the financing of missions involved additional appropriations. The practice which the General Assembly had followed with respect to such activities during its fiftieth session should not be continued, since it created difficulties for the entire budget process. It was unfortunate that, because of the political position held by the United States delegation with respect to the budget ceiling, draft resolution A/52/L.19 had been revised to reduce the amount originally requested by the Secretary-General. In the specific case of MINUGUA, it was perfectly appropriate to provide enough resources to enable the Mission to fulfil its mandate for the duration of the implementation of the peace agreements (in other words, until the end of 1999). She therefore agreed with the Advisory Committee that the Fifth Committee should authorize the amount originally requested by the Secretary-General.

6. **Ms. Castellanos González** (Guatemala) said that, since its establishment, MINUGUA had played a vital role in the Guatemalan peace process. Its verification functions, which were fully supported by the Guatemalan Government, were still relevant. It would have been preferable for the General Assembly to have extended the Mission's mandate up to the year 2000, as specified in the Agreement on the Implementation, Compliance and Verification Timetable for the Peace Agreements. However, under draft resolution A/52/L.19/Rev.1, resources would be provided for MINUGUA only until the end of 1998. She hoped that MINUGUA would be provided with the resources it needed to complete its mandate by continuing to function until the year 2000.

7. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee should take a decision on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/52/L.19/Rev.1, based on the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

8. **Ms. Shearouse** (United States of America) said that her delegation was prepared to take a decision on the revised appropriation of $28.2 million referred to in document A/C.5/52/21/Add.1, but not on the recommendation contained in the Advisory Committee's report (A/52/707).

9. **The Chairman** said that the Committee would return to the issue after holding further informal consultations.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.6/52/L.15 and Corr.1: report of the International Law Commission on the work of its forty-ninth session (A/C.5/52/23 and Corr.1)

10. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/52/23) on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.6/52/L.15 and Corr.1, which took note of the comments of the International Law Commission on the question of a split session for 1998, as well as of the Commission's position that it should hold an 11-week session in 1998 and a 12-week session in 1999.

11. The Advisory Committee recalled that, in the budget proposals for the 1998-1999 biennium, the Secretariat had requested a provision of $1,851,100 for two 10-week sessions in Geneva and had indicated that the Commission would consider the issue of a split session of five weeks in Geneva and five weeks in New York during its 1997 session. The Advisory Committee also recalled that in paragraph III.15 of its report on the proposed programme budget for 1998-1999 (A/52/7), it had indicated that, although it had been informed that such a session would affect the cost only marginally, it believed that other factors such as the meeting capacity at Headquarters, which was already saturated, should be taken into account. In paragraph VIII.145 of its report, the Committee had further indicated that during 1995 and 1996, the number of requests for meetings with interpretation in New York that could not be accommodated had been 202 and 174 respectively.

12. The annex to the Secretary-General's statement on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.5/52/L.15 and Corr.1 showed the additional requirements for an 11-week split session in Geneva in 1998 and a 12-week session in 1999 in the same venue to amount to $275,528, and annex II showed additional requirements of $245,200 for an 11-week split session to be held first in Geneva and then in New York in 1998 and a 12-week session in Geneva in 1999.

13. In the light of the Advisory Committee's observations, the International Law Commission's preference to hold the second part of its session also in Geneva, as indicated in paragraph 226 of its report (A/52/10), and the Secretariat's recent confirmation that developments in conference servicing now allowed for the second part of the Commission's 1998 session to be serviced in Geneva, the Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.6/52/L.15 and Corr.1, an additional appropriation of $275,500 would be required under section 6 of the proposed programme budget for the 1998-1999 biennium.

14. **Ms. Shearouse** (United States of America) said that her delegation had difficulties with the financial implications of draft resolution A/C.6/52/L.15. Historically, the International Law Commission had always met for 10-week sessions. Although she understood the need for a split session in 1998, she felt that the Commission could accomplish each session's work within 10 weeks. Her delegation therefore could not support the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

15. **Ms. Goicochea** (Cuba) asked whether, according to the budget process established by General Assembly resolution 41/213, the budgetary implications of the draft resolution would be financed from the contingency fund. She also wished to know the current level of resources in the contingency fund.

16. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller) said that the amount recommended by the Advisory Committee would have to come from the contingency fund. The fund established for 1998-1999 contained about $19 million; the recommended appropriation would be the first drawdown from the fund for that period.

17. **Ms. Goicochea** (Cuba) said that the Committee should take a decision, in line with the budget process, that simply indicated the budgetary implications of a decision of the General Assembly. Only the Sixth Committee could take a decision on the length of the International Law Commission's sessions.

18. **Ms. Shearouse** (United States of America) said that she was fully aware of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/213. However, her delegation was opposed in principle to the extension of the Commission's sessions, and therefore could not support the financial implications

thereof. The Committee could either hold further informal consultations or take a vote on the matter.

19. **Ms. Goicochea** (Cuba) said that it would be useful to know what the Sixth Committee had decided with respect to the length of the Commission's sessions, since the budgetary implications under consideration were based on that decision. She agreed that informal consultations might be useful as a means of clearing up the difficulty mentioned by the United States delegation, since the genuine concerns of any Member State should be taken into consideration.

20. **Mr. Tankoano** (Niger) said that the Sixth Committee had taken a vote, but not a recorded vote, on the International Law Commission's request to extend its sessions. The majority of delegations had supported the Commission's position, in view of its heavy workload. The measure was intended to enhance the Commission's efficiency by enabling it to complete its work at each session so that items would not have to be carried over from year to year.

21. **Mr. Saha** (India) said that his delegation agreed with the view expressed by the representative of Cuba. The Fifth Committee was not entitled to alter a decision that had been made by the Sixth Committee. Informal consultations should be held on the matter.

22. **Mr. Tommo Monthe** (Cameroon) said that the length of the session of the International Law Commission was a fundamentally important issue for the Sixth Committee; the Fifth Committee's prerogative was restricted to debating the financial implications of the decisions which that Committee had made and to accepting or rejecting the relevant recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

Request for a subvention to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research resulting from the recommendations of the Board of Trustees of the Institute on the work programme of the Institute for 1998 (A/C.5/52/14)

23. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, because the Advisory Committee had already discussed the request made by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) for its annual subvention in the context of the programme budget, the Committee had recommended that a subvention in the amount of $213,000 should be made available for 1998.

24. **Ms. Shearouse** (United States of America) recalled that the General Assembly had decided at its forty-ninth session that future funding for regional institutes would be considered only on the basis of criteria proposed and approved by the General Assembly to determine whether such institutes should be funded from the regular budget. Her delegation could not recall the General Assembly ever having defined the criteria for the inclusion of regional centres in the regular budget, and therefore had reservations about the continued financing of the Institute by that method. The Secretariat should clarify the relevant criteria.

25. **Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo** (Uganda), supported by **Ms. Goicochea** (Cuba), endorsed the recommendation of the Advisory Committee.

26. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller) said that the General Assembly had not yet taken action on the report which it had requested regarding the funding of regional institutes. However, UNIDIR was not a regional institute because its statute, which the General Assembly itself had adopted, stipulated that the Assembly should provide it with subventions.

27. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to recommend that the General Assembly should take note of the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/52/14 and the recommendations thereon of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

28. *It was so decided.*

Revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions of the Economic and Social Council at its organizational and substantive sessions of 1997 (A/C.5/52/17)

29. **The Chairman** said that, since the resolutions and decisions of the Economic and Social Council referred to in the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/52/17 did not at the current stage necessitate additional appropriations for the biennium 1998-1999, he took it that the Committee wished to recommend that the General Assembly should take note of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/52/17 regarding the revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions of the Economic and Social Council at its organizational and substantive sessions of 1997.

30. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 153: Human resources management (*continued*) (A/52/580 and Corr.1)

31. **Ms. Salim** (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat

contained in document A/52/580, said that human resources planning was a critical element of the Secretary-General's human resources strategy. In order to plan more effectively for the implementation of programmes and mandates, it was essential that the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) should be in a position to assist programme managers with the forecasting, planning and effective utilization of all the human resources at the Organization's disposal.

32. To that end, the Secretary-General's report had been submitted in a new format that responded to the need for more comprehensive reporting on human resources issues in the Secretariat. Accordingly, the second part of the report had been conceived as a human resources planning report identifying the major characteristics of the Secretariat staff and the trends that could reasonably be expected in the future. It also analysed the major demographic characteristics of Secretariat staff with respect to a number of parameters that cut across departments and offices. Much of the human resources analysis had been made possible through improved data quality from the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) database.

33. Turning to other matters, she drew the Committee's attention to conference room paper A/C.5/52/CRP.2 on the implementation of resolution 51/226 in which the Secretariat had requested guidance from the General Assembly as to whether the transitional measures applicable to staff serving on peacekeeping support account posts should be extended to all staff members who were serving on appointments of less than one year as at 3 April 1997 and had been placed on a regular budget or extrabudgetary post for one year or longer. Such an extension would require the specific authorization of the General Assembly. The Secretariat had also asked for clarification of paragraph 27 of section III.B of General Assembly resolution 51/226 with respect to the level of posts for which staff members having served for at least 12 months in peacekeeping or other field missions would be eligible to apply when notice of an internal vacancy had been issued.

34. Moreover, in its resolution 51/226, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to prepare, no later than the end of 1997, guidelines on the terms of reference, selection, hiring and renewal of contracts of consultants, and to submit those guidelines to the Advisory Committee. All of those issues were currently being addressed, but larger questions had arisen in the course of internal discussions within the Secretariat. The whole issue of the use of consultants was closely related to that of core versus non-core functions and fixed-term versus career appointments, on which the Secretary-General was scheduled to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session. Accordingly, OHRM wished to request that the submission of guidelines on the use of consultants should be deferred until the fifty-third session to allow time for the issue to be thoroughly reviewed by the Secretary-General's task force on human resources management. It was envisaged that the best practices of all aspects of the recruitment and use of consultants would be examined by a team of independent experts. In addition, the best interests of the Organization would be served by eliciting the views of other entities in the United Nations system. Such cooperation and coordination would result in improved procedures including the development of common rostering of candidates for consultancies, harmonization of levels of remuneration, and application of common selection standards.

35. **Mr. Yamagiwa** (Japan) expressed his delegation's appreciation to the Secretariat for its report contained in document A/52/580 and, in particular, for part II which, for the first time, provided an understanding of the current positive trends in the personnel structure of the Organization. At the same time, however, his delegation regretted the extraordinary delay in the submission of the report, which it had received only 10 days earlier. Perhaps the Secretariat could provide an explanation.

36. Furthermore, the document itself contained a number of errors and inconsistencies. In table F, for example, most of the figures for the percentage of total appointments were incorrect and, in paragraph 94, the figure of 8,580, which was the number of women recruited in the reference period, represented 39.8 per cent of the 21,563 all staff recruited during that period, and not 32 per cent as stated in the document. Given the fact that precision was required for the Committee's deliberations, he urged the Secretariat to pay closer attention to the preparation of the report in the future.

37. Regarding the representation of Member States, his delegation welcomed the fact that the number of under-represented States had been reduced from 22 in 1996 to 20 in 1997 and wished to express its appreciation for the Secretariat's efforts in that regard. At the same time, some explanation was needed of the increase in the number of unrepresented States from 23 in 1996 to 25 in 1997. As Japan was one of the most seriously under-represented Member States, his delegation reiterated its urgent request that the Secretariat should, as soon as possible, establish a concrete plan to redress the situation.

38. Regarding recruitment activities, as described in paragraphs 35 to 39 of the report, his delegation would like some clarification on the number of staff appointed to P-2

and P-3 posts without having passed national competitive examinations, as well as information on the legal basis for those appointments, in the light of General Assembly resolution 51/226. The five staff members referred to in paragraph 37 of the report were of special concern in that regard. His delegation would also like a breakdown by year of examination for the 26 appointments made from among successful candidates in national competitive examinations. In that connection, the Secretariat should spare no effort to shorten the time required to make appointments, including improvement of coordination with the Office of Human Resources Management.

39. Referring to Part Two of the report, which dealt with human resources demographics, he said that his delegation shared the Secretariat's concern about the relatively small number of staff in the lower grades in both the Professional and General Service categories, but saw the small number of higher level posts in the two categories as a fairly common phenomenon among sound organizations, which did not limit career development disproportionately. Regarding staff morale with respect to career development, he emphasized the importance of fairness and transparency in the promotion procedure rather than the availability of top positions.

40. He welcomed the continued increase in the number of permanent appointments of staff subject to geographical distribution from 1987 to 1995, as well as the increase in the number of fixed-term appointments both in absolute terms and as a proportion of overall staff.

41. His delegation fully shared the Secretariat's concern regarding the shortage of young staff. In that connection, he noted that 44 per cent of staff members who had resigned were below 35 years of age and 70 per cent were below 45. The Secretariat was very urgently requested to provide a diagnosis of the situation, together with proposals for remedying it.

42. **Mr. Sial** (Pakistan) said that serious deficiencies existed in the use of consultants within the Organization, as had been noted, for example, by the Board of Auditors in its report on the voluntary funds administered by UNHCR (A/52/5/Add.5). While his delegation could join the consensus on the Assistant Secretary-General's request to defer submission of the report on the use of consultants and associated contractual procedures until the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, the relevant rules and regulations, as well as the pertinent provisions of General Assembly resolution 51/226, should in the meantime be implemented in order to remedy deficiencies in the use of consultants identified by the Board of Auditors and other external bodies.

43. In conclusion, he asked when the Secretariat expected the report requested in paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution 51/221 to be available.

44. **Mr. Saha** (India) thanked the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management for providing the clarifications on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 51/226 in document A/C.5/52/CRP.2, in response to questions raised by his delegation at an earlier meeting. He requested that the members of the Group of 77 and China should be given time to respond to the conference room paper and to provide the Secretariat with the requisite unambiguous guidance.

45. **Mr. Mirmohammad** (Islamic Republic of Iran) noted that table 4 in document A/52/580, while it showed total staff changes between 30 June 1996 and 30 June 1997, did not indicate which posts had been affected. He would be grateful if the Secretariat could provide that information.

46. **Ms. Brennen-Haylock** (Bahamas) noted that, in paragraph 29 of document A/52/580, the target for the overall participation rate of women in posts subject to geographical distribution by the year 2000 was given as 35 per cent. It was her understanding that, under General Assembly resolution 51/226, that target had been increased to 50 per cent. She asked for clarification from the Secretariat. She also wondered how far the Organization was from achieving the 25 per cent participation rate of women in posts at the D-1 level and above.

47. In table B on page 14 of the report, the figures for the degree of representation of Member States in the North American and Caribbean region did not properly reflect the fact that the Caribbean subregion was grossly under-represented, accounting for less than 1 per cent of the figure for the region as a whole.

48. Finally, she noted with concern the statement in paragraph 87 of the report that the current rate of increase in female staff members in the Director and Professional categories would not result in gender equality by the year 2000. That goal had been reaffirmed at every session of the General Assembly for a number of years and she expressed the hope that the Secretariat would work more diligently to achieve it.

49. **Ms. Salim** (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management), replying to questions raised by a number of delegations, said that the delay in issuing document A/52/580 and any errors in the figures it contained were attributable to the fact that the transition to the

Integrated Management Information System was not yet complete. It was hoped that the system would shortly have been stabilized and that it would be possible to issue the next report in time and with fewer errors.

50. Regarding the participation rate of women in high-level posts, she said that 22.8 per cent of posts at D-1 level and above were currently held by women.

51. Replies to the other questions asked by delegations would be provided in writing.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.